(b) if so, whether the said trains have been started and if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) the number of new trains announced to be started this year and which regions would be connected as a result thereof and the number of trains out of these which have already been started; and

(d) the reasons for not starting the trains regarding which announcement were made?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. In the Rail Budget 2004-05, announcements were made *inter alia,* for introduction of 17 pairs of Sampark Kranti Express trains, which would provide connectivity between different States and the Union Capital. Many of the trains could not be introduced earlier due to operational and resources constraints and enforcement of Model Code of Conduct in the States of Bihar, Jharkhand and Haryana.

(c) and (d) The new trains announced in the Rail Budget are introduced during the course of that financial year. The numbers and destinations of the trains to be introduced during 2005-2006 have been announced by the Minister of Railways in the Rail Budget speech for the year 2005-2006 on 26.02.2005 in the Parliament.

Interim Report of Godhra Incident

577. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN:
SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL:
SHRI JIBON ROY:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Banerjee Committee constituted by the railway administration has submitted its interim report regarding incident of fire in the S-6 bogie of Sabarmati Express at Godhra station on 27th February, 2002 to Government; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The observations of the Banerjee Committee report are as under—

(i) The fire on Sabarmati Express on 27th February, 2002 cannot but be ascribed to be an accidental fire which engulfed the coir, the foam and the latex available on berths coupled with the luggage of the passengers causing thereby the smell of burning and thereafter dense smoke culminating into leaping flames and not a deliberate attempted event.

(ii) There has been a preponderance of evidence that the fire in coach N0.S6 originated in the coach itself without any external input.

(iii) The question of any miscreant activity does not and canot arise.

(iv) All is not well with Railway Safety as they should be in their approach in order to avoid any further untoward incident like the present one.

(v) There has been failure on the part of the Commission of Railway Safety and Railway Administration to conduct a statutory inquiry into this accident.

(vi) The response of Godhra Fire Brigade was not unsatisfactory.

(vii) Failure of Government Railway Police has also been adversely commented.

(viii) Role of Railway Administration has been adversely commented for—

(a) Not making any concerted efforts to preserve clues of the incidents.

(b) Not giving due importance to this railway accident as this was considered to be a miscreant activity by Railway Administration without any inquiry.

(c) Discrepancies in record keeping.

(d) Not following up the specified practices at the time of railway accident like certification of track and coach fitness.

(e) Failure of Railway Protection Force (RPF).

(f) No individual has been held responsible for the incident.

No Action Taken Report has been prepared in view of this report being interim in nature.

Andheri - Ghatkopar rail line

578. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are planning to start any new rail service between Andheri and Ghatkopar in Mumbai; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and by when the project is likely to be started?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Indian Railways are not planning introduction of any new rail service between Andheri and Ghatkopar.

(b) Government of Maharashtra through Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) has programmed provision of Mass Rapid Transport System (MRTS) between Andheri and Ghatkopar as Phase-I of their Mumbai Metro Master Plan.

Rail accidents

† 579. SHRI UDAY PRATAP SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of rail accidents during the year 2004-05;

(b) the details of financial assistance provided to relatives of passengers killed or seriously injured in the said accidents;

(c) the details of losses suffered by Railways in the said accidents, separately; and

(d) the concrete steps being taken to check the recurrence of such accidents?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.